In this issue:

- **National Finance Center Service Transcends Tragedy**
- **Migration to USDA Web Standards Continues**
- **eGovernment Web Site Receives Upgrade**
- **ITS Help Desk Takes Over eAuthentication Customer Support**
- **Stricter Standards for IT Reporting Now Set for Fiscal Year 2006**
- **Enterprise Correspondence Management Module Replaces Staff Action**

National Finance Center Service Transcends Tragedy

The National Finance Center's (NFC) mission has always been to design, develop, implement, and operate cost effective financial, administrative, and management information systems and services supporting the missions of USDA and its customers. NFC is responsible for financial, administrative, and HR functions that directly impact over 560,000 civilian Federal employees from approximately 125 Federal agency customers. In order to achieve their mission, NFC provides centralized, automated, integrated systems and support services for payroll, personnel, and administrative activities.

Located just outside of New Orleans, LA, NFC demonstrated its capacity to remain true to its mission even during the most catastrophic of circumstances, when the Agency's headquarters were evacuated as a result of Hurricane Katrina's devastating impact on New Orleans and the Gulf Coast.

Only one day before the Hurricane made landfall, NFC Personnel were making their way to the Agency's alternate operations centers in Philadelphia, PA and Grand Prairie, TX to ensure that customers experienced as little service interruption as possible. With employees evacuated out of the New Orleans area and eventually dispersed across several alternate worksites, NFC was able to successfully process the upcoming pay period(s) with almost no service disruption. Because of the technological innovations made by NFC, the loss of a physical location did not interrupt the delivery of service. The Agency's resilience exemplifies its dedication and determination to provide its customers

with the necessary support and resources to effectively execute financial operations in conjunction with the specifications of the Presidential Management Agenda and subsequent eGovernment directives.

All NFC employees have been safely accounted for and are continuing to provide dedicated service.

Migration to USDA Web Standards Continues

On August 12, 2005, Terri Teuber, Director of the Office of Communications, and Dave Combs, Chief Information Officer, distributed a memo to Agency Heads reiterating the requirements that all USDA agencies and staff offices must meet USDA's look and feel standards, comply with OMB's Policies for Federal Agency Public Web sites, and implement the Stellent Web Content Management System. A Department-wide migration to Stellent supports USDA's objectives of sharing content enterprise-wide through the Department's portal, www.usda.gov. Making agency content available through the content management system is a primary goal toward providing effective and efficient delivery of information and services to USDA customers, partners, and employees. A second memo from Kim Taylor was subsequently issued to USDA Webmasters, detailing USDA and OMB expectations and deadlines for Web migration. Agencies were also instructed on how to track their progress on a monthly basis.

In a third memo, Kim Taylor reinforced the requirement that agencies and staff offices must meet OMB Policies for Federal Agency Public Web sites by the end of December 2005. These OMB requirements ensure that each agency employs a customer-focused Web site that includes features such as, links to other government Web sites, access to information in standard file formats, and online search capability.

The Enterprise Shared Services Team will reach out to all agencies and staff offices in the coming weeks to assist in the planning and implementation of standards and guidelines in support of these memos.

eGovernment Web Site Receives Upgrade

In an effort to make the eGovernment Web site a more informative and user-friendly resource for USDA employees and customers, the eGovernment Team held an informal Web Forum on September 22, 2005 to identify ways to increase the navigability and usefulness of the team's Web site.

The Web site now offers greater access to USDA and Federal eGovernment Web resources, creating a more informative environment for learning about Federal-wide eGovernment initiatives, the President's Management Agenda and its influence on eGovernment, and USDA's specific eGovernment efforts including user authentication, electronic learning, and shared enterprise-wide IT services. The Web site, eGov.USDA.gov, contains both public facing pages as well as an intranet protected by USDA's eAuthentication Service. The Web site conforms to the Web Standards outlined in the USDA Web Style Guide.

ITS Help Desk Takes Over eAuthentication Customer Support

In response to customer requests for improved eAuthentication Help Desk support, the eAuthentication Team migrated all technical and customer support to the USDA Information Technology Services (ITS) Help Desk. Basic support services relating to account passwords, usage, and maintenance, were migrated to the USDA ITS Service Desk beginning August 1, 2005. This shift in responsibility will benefit customers by improving initial response times, supplying greater staff resources during peak use hours, and lowering service costs by streamlining security-related support services.

The ITS Service Desk may be reached by telephone at 1-800-457-3642 or at eAuthHelpDesk@usda.gov. An eAuthentication support group is also available through ITS for more advanced eAuthentication issues such as application errors.

Stricter Standards for IT Reporting Now Set for Fiscal Year 2006

In an effort to hold Federal agencies accountable for financial and accounting practices, the Office of Management and Budget will enforce stricter internal controls for agency financial management starting in the 2006 fiscal year. These new practices will be reflected in agency performance on the Quarterly President's Management Agenda Scorecard beginning the first quarter of fiscal year 2006.

Each agency will be required to provide a framework for implementing financial management practices by October 2006 and a statement assuring OMB of these controls is due in January 2006. Although controls have been identified in the President's Management Agenda, agencies will now be required to document their controls, test for risk, take corrective action, and document all actions taken in an effort to reach a higher level of accountability. This requirement for stricter internal controls is comparable with the Sarbanes-Oxley Bill that currently holds corporations accountable for their financial and accounting information.

Enterprise Correspondence Management Module Replaces Staff Action

On Tuesday, September 6, 2005, the Office of the Executive Secretariat (OES) transitioned the management of all of the Secretary of Agriculture's executive correspondence to the Enterprise Correspondence Management Module (ECMM), a key component of USDA's new Enterprise Content Management suite of applications.

ECMM replaces Staff Action, the legacy correspondence management system USDA had used since January 20, 1998. The ECMM Team is committed to making transition to the new module as smooth and painless as possible. The layout of ECMM is similar to Staff Action, a feature that should make the transition easy for system users. Users will also appreciate the improved query features including the ability to search for text in scanned documents. In addition, please note that Staff Action referral codes have been replaced with the new OES processing codes. It is recommended that users keep a copy of the Processing Codes Crosswalk close at hand. The ECMM User Guide is also available through the ECM Main Menu.

For any additional questions or concerns, the ECMM Hotline is available for customer support during regular business hours at (202) 720-1561. For business issues, such as assistance with revising a workflow or changing an agency designation, contact your agency OES Correspondence Review Officers.

For more information or questions, please contact the eGovernment Team at:
- **Phone: (202) 720-6144**
- **eMail: egov@usda.gov**
- **Web: www.egov.usda.gov**